Saint Patrick's Church Westgate BRADFORD

(1853 - 2003)

A brief history of a parish, a church and its people

By

Patrick Lowery



Acknowledgments

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Saint Patrick's Church, Bradford.

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On Saint Patrick's Day - 17th March 1852, the foundation stone for Saint Patrick's Church, Sedgefield Terrace, Westgate, Bradford, was laid down before a gathering of several thousands.

The Church authorities endeavoured to keep the ceremony a low-key affair because of the danger of civil disorder. At the time there was a general dislike and even fear of all things Catholic; it was only two years after Pope Pius IX had restored the English Catholic Hierarchy, an act which had caused considerable unease, resentment and bigotry at the time. Consequently, the large crowd which gathered for the ceremony, made their way almost surreptitiously to the site of the new church after the celebration of Mass at St. Mary's Chapel in Stott Hill.

No banners or flags - not even a Crucifix was displayed; nonetheless, it is difficult to understand how such a large crowd could gather in one spot without attracting some attention. According to Cannon Earnshaw, Parish Priest of Saint Patrick's Church, writing some fifty years later, every vantage point was taken by the spectators of the ceremony, even the roofs of nearby buildings.



Canon Thomas Harrison

The Bishop of Beverley, the Right Reverend Doctor Briggs, and the clergy, all vested in a nearby shop at the top of Vaughan Street for which a rental of one pound was charged: a considerable sum at that time, considering the purpose for which it was hired, and the short period of rental.

It was the beginning of the end of a long and arduous endeavour, which started years before when Cannon Harrison organised the collection of the necessary funds and then the purchase of a suitable site for a second Catholic church for Bradford.

Canon Thomas Harrison was the Parish Priest of the old Saint Mary's Chapel in Stott Hill, which was opened in 1824. It was superseded by the imposing building in East Parade, which is still to be seen to this day. The foundation stone for the new building in East Parade was only laid down on 12th September 1874, over twenty years after Saint Patrick's church was built.

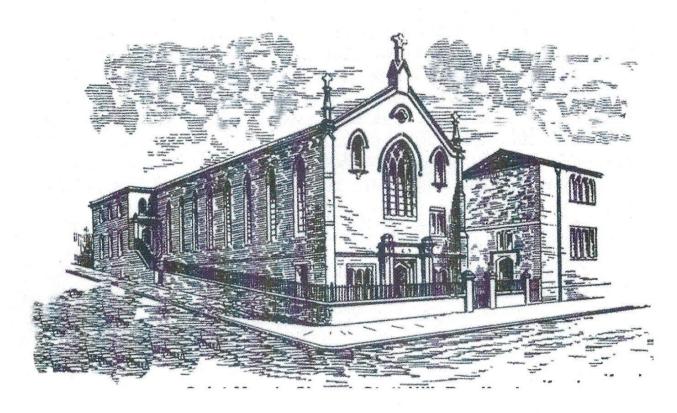
Because there was only one Catholic church in Bradford at this time Canon Harrison was effectively the Parish Priest of all of Bradford. The first Saint Mary's was always known as a chapel not a church, probably because of its small size. "A lowly structure" was how Canon Earnshaw described it and another historian, more politely, said it was "unpretentious".

Canon Harrison was educated at Saint Cuthberth's college, Ushaw, and his hobbies are recorded as fishing, photography and music. By all accounts he was exceptionally proficient at all three pursuits. Considering that photography was still in its infancy at that time, it is interesting to find that many of his photographs were good enough to be still on display in several convents and presbyteries of the Diocese over fifty years later. He is also credited with writing the music to which the hymn "God of Mercy and Compassion" is sung. He was a curate at St. Marie's, Sheffield, when he was appointed Parish Priest at St. Mary's chapel, Stott Hill, Bradford, on 1st January 1843.

To understand the general feeling of hostility towards Catholics during this period it is worth looking at the public attitude in regard to the opening of Saint Mary's chapel.

Religion played an important part in the lives of the people of Bradford at this time who for the most part were staunch Nonconformists and held the established church, the Church of England, in nearly as much contempt as the Church of Rome.

Saint Mary's Chapel, the first Catholic church in Bradford, was consecrated on Wednesday 27th July 1825. The ceremony included High Mass sung by Rev. Benedict Rayment of York with the sermon preached by Right Rev. Doctor Baines, Bishop of Thespia.



Saint Mary's Chapel, Stott Hill, Bradford

The event caused no little fury in Bradford, and hours before it was due to start at 10.0am, crowds gathered outside the chapel. Not only were many of those present, not Catholic worshippers, but quite a few were there with the intention of causing trouble. It is not clear if any serious disturbances took place, but we do know that there followed a series of theological arguments conducted in public for several months afterwards by various intellectuals and some non-Catholic ministers. These concerned the contents of the sermon delivered by Rev. Dr. Baines, which would suggest that not all the non-Catholics who attended the chapel's opening ceremony were uneducated troublemakers. At a period in history when illiteracy was very high amongst the humbler classes and quite high even amongst the better off, someone had been able to record the details of the Bishop's sermon and disseminate it to the appropriate people.

There were several well-attended public meetings afterwards where the so-called errors in this sermon were better explained to the Protestants of Bradford. The Reverend J. Taylor, curate at the Bradford Parish Church - now the Bradford Cathedral, wrote and published a pamphlet on the issue entitled "The Errors, Corruption and Claims of the Church of Rome Exhibited In a Sermon by P.A. Baines D.D. Exposed and Refuted."

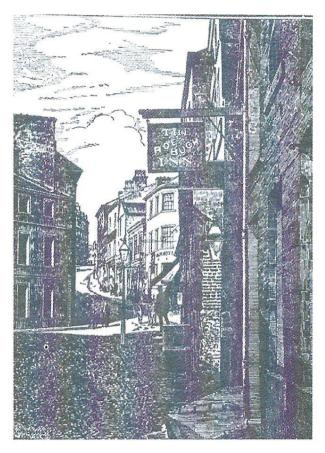
There can be no doubt that there were many stalworths of the Catholic Faith in Bradford who, despite the danger of personal injury or at the very least public opprobrium celebrated the Holy Mass in secret, usually in private houses. Now, with the opening of

Saint Mary's Chapel the Catholics were becoming more daring, which was having an unsettling effect on the Protestants of Bradford.

The Bradford historian William Scruton writing in 1889 states "Whether or not Roman Catholicism was completely rooted out of Bradford after the Reformation we have not been able to learn, but that there would be families here and there who clung to the old faith is not at all improbable. It was not however, until the year 1822 that we hear of any attempt being made on the part of this church to regain a footing here - an attempt which caused no little alarm to the Protestants of Bradford."

The first we here of the Catholics of Bradford attempting to hold a public Mass was in 1822 when a room was hired in Commercial Street, Bradford, for this purpose. However, the owner of the premises eventually reneged on the agreement because of threats to himself and his property, and the Mass was cancelled.

The first public Mass in Bradford was celebrated at the Roebuck Inn, but according to historian William Scruton, "Some of the persons in authority interfered in a very improper manner, and the landlady being threatened with the loss of her licence for allowing her room to be used by the Roman Catholics..."



The Roebuck Inn

The consequence was that public Masses ceased to be celebrated for some time. The Catholics of Bradford were eventually able to acquire a building in Chapel Lane, Bradford, which had formerly been used by the Southcottians. They were a Non Conformist sect of Protestants, of which there were many in Bradford at this time. How, it is not known, but the Catholics managed to celebrate public Mass and hold other services apparently unhindered until the opening of Saint Mary's Chapel at Stott Hill, in 1824. Even after then, Mass continued to be celebrated in private houses and in rooms hired in public buildings because the Chapel was not large enough or convenient enough to satisfy the requirements of a fairly large and scattered congregation.

St. Mary's chapel, had been in existence for about 25 years when its congregation began to increase considerably due mainly to a large influx of people from Ireland. Quite a lot of these people were experienced woolcombers, a trade which still had not been mechanised although the Industrial Revolution was seeing the introduction of machinery into most other areas of the textile trade resulting in many workers losing their jobs.

The pressure placed on the Irish wool combing trade by the passing of the Act of Union in 1800, was mainly responsible for the influx of woolcombers from Ireland. The trade in Ireland deteriorated so much that hundreds were thrown out of work, whilst the reverse was happening in Bradford. Many of these experienced woolcombers found their way to Bradford where, needless to say, they were welcomed by the mill owners for a section of the textile trade which, still not mechanised, meant that they were somewhat skilled in a trade where most of the other workers were little more than labourers or machine operators. This caused a degree of resentment in the industry.

In 1845 came the potato blight, that spread throughout Ireland causing the famine which brought misery and death to millions and resulted in the emigration of thousands to these shores, many of whom settled in Bradford. Most of these people were farm hands and were therefore completely unskilled for industrial work and, as many came from the Western regions of Ireland where Gaelic was the native language, they were unable to write or speak in English. These were poor people in every respect, and they found accommodation in the rat-infested slums in the poorest areas of the town, which were mostly down by the Beck at Goitside, an area that was later to become part of Saint Patrick's parish.

This was a time when Bradford was rapidly expanding from little more than a small market town in 1800 to a town of importance and a major exporter of textiles. In 1801 there were only13,000 inhabitants in Bradford, but this had now grown to well over 100,000 and was still growing apace. The woolcombing part of the textile industry at this time (before mechanisation) was a dangerous occupation. The average age of death in Bradford was 20 years 3 months and the average age of death of woolcombers was 15.6 years as recorded in 1844.

Canon Harrison initiated collections within the Parish to fund the building of another Church in the town to meet the needs of his growing congregation. It is a daunting task for any priest at the best of times to organise the building of a new church, but it must have been particularly so for Cannon Harrison. It must be remembered that in addition to the hostility felt towards Catholics, and Irish Catholics in particular, there was the additional problem of the extreme poverty that existed in these Isles at this time. There was no welfare state to protect the poor; those who did not earn did not eat, and anyone who could not or did not work, or was otherwise deprived had to rely totally on charity for their welfare.

Even though most of the people of the Parish were poor, badly paid labourers and machine operatives, many of them went out night after night knocking on the doors of their neighbours and friends, collecting from people who were equally poor. Church collections after Mass were also used to bolster the funds.

The people of the parish gave willingly of their time and small incomes in their efforts to build another Church. There was little or no income from anyone other than the people of the parish. It must be recorded however, that there were a few well-off Catholics both within the town and outside who also contributed to the funds in no small way.

By 1850 there was enough money available for Canon Harrison to initiate a search for a suitable site for the building of a Church. This was not an easy task; indeed it was probably more difficult than raising the funds. No one would sell land if they knew it was likely to be used for Catholic worship whatever type of building it supported.

A Catholic businessman of the town - Mr. H. Westwood was approached and he agreed to use his business connections to secretly acquire some land for the church.

He made an arrangement with another businessman of the town, Mr. Robert Vaughan Wynne Williams - to purchase on behalf of the Church, a portion of a larger plot of land, which Mr. Williams would purchase from the Rawson sisters.

The two sisters Elizabeth and Mary Rawson, were the unmarried daughters of Benjamine Rawson who had been Lord of the Manor of Bradford and had resided at the Manor House then situated in Kirkgate, before moving to Nidd Hall near Knaresborough. When he died, he left his estate to the two women and Elizabeth Rawson inherited the title Lady of the Manor of Bradford. They were important people in Bradford and had a pedigree that went back to the reign of Henry V11. Rawson Market, Rawson Square and several other places are named after this family.

They owned a large amount of land in and around Bradford, part of which was a section land at White Abbey known as The Close or Paddock. The land was at the top of a road

known at the time as Cropper Lane, which is now called Rebbecca Street, and nearby was Westgrove Street, which had been built-up about five years previously.

Apart from this, most of the land in the area was open fields and hedgerows that extended down to the Beck at Goitside near Thornton Road. On the other side was White Abbey Road, which at that time was a narrow road that was part of the coach road to the North and included Cottingley Moor and Toller Lane. The Lower Globe public house in Toller Lane was the last stopping place for the coach to take on passengers.

The Rawson sisters agreed the sale of this land with Mr. Robert Vaughan Wynne Williams and the sale was completed on 30th July 1850. The two women were in complete ignorance of the use to which part of the land was to be put, and there is no doubt that they would not have allowed the sale had they known. Williams transferred the portion of the land to Westwood as agreed, and he in turn then sold it to the Church. Whether Williams was aware that Westwood intended to immediately sell his piece of the land to the Church is not clear, but it seems very unlikely that he did not know.

Directly opposite the proposed Church site, which was in the countryside and well outside the Bradford conurbation, was the Bradford Hospital later to be called the Bradford Royal Infirmary. It was situated on the land that is now a recreation ground at the junction of Lumb Lane and White Abbey Road.

After the sale of the land, Mr.Williams then laid out the rest of the land for housing. He divided the area into the streets, which still exist today naming them after himself using his names: Vaughan Street, Wynne Street and William Street. The title of William Street was later changed to Sedgefield Terrace.

When the two sisters, Elizabeth and Mary Rawson discovered the purpose for which part of land was to be used they were furious, and together with their many supporters made a determined effort to cancel the sale of the land or at least prevent the building of a Catholic Church on it.

Unfortunately for them they were too late: by the time the intended use of the land became known, the sale had already been completed. £1,057 had been paid as a down payment and the firm of architects Weightman, Hadfield and Goldie of Sheffield appointed to draw up the plans. Almost immediately work commenced on digging out the foundations of the second Catholic church in Bradford.

As the parishioners of the new church were for the most part sons and daughters of Erin, it was considered fitting that the Church should be dedicated to God in the name of Ireland's patron saint - Saint Patrick. So the blessing and laying of the foundation stone was delayed until the Saint's feast day on 17th March 1852

As the building work progressed it soon outstripped the monies available and it was necessary for a mortgage to be taken out on the building and land for the sum of £2,000, which was loaned by an English woman, Miss. Anna Maria Tempest of Ackworth Grange, near Pontefract.

She was a member of the well-known old English Catholic family who had retained and practised the Catholic Faith for hundreds of years in spite of the Reformation and the dangerous penal times that followed.

On Tuesday, 12th July 1853, St. Patrick's Church was blessed and opened by the Bishop of Beverley, The Right Reverend Doctor Briggs.

On the following day, the official public opening of the Church took place with High Mass before the Bishop, sung by Cannon Harrison. A large number of priests from towns and cities in the neighbourhood were seated in the chancel, and although the congregation wasn't large at first, by the end of the day most of the parishioners had attended the church services. It was a long day of prayers, and in the evening there were Vespers and Benediction together with a sermon. We are told that music was supplied by an orchestral accompaniment in addition to the organ.

Canon Harrison left Saint Mary's, Bradford, after nineteen years of devoted service to his flock and was appointed chaplain at Stourton Towers where he remained until 1875. The following year he went to stay with his sister in Southport where he died on 31st August 1876 in his sixtieth year.

Saint Patrick's became an independent parish in April, 1855 with the Parish area defined and a Parish Priest appointed: he was Reverend Thomas Lynch. Father Lynch stayed in a nearby house in Drewton Street, which was used as the parish presbytery, and he lived there throughout his time in Saint Patrick's Parish.

A native of Kells, County Meath, Ireland, he was the life and soul of the party, and liked to joke and sing at gatherings and social events in the parish. He was in charge of the parish for less than four years, but in that time he made a big impression on the people and his achievements were so great that they were commemorated after his death. He was obliged to retire from his duties at St. Patrick's Church in 1858 because of the devastation caused by consumption, which we are told he contracted shortly after his ordination. He performed the first Baptism in the parish, which took place on 15th April 1855.

One of the first things he set about achieving was the provision of a Catholic education for the children. He opened two schools: one in White Abbey and the other in Silsbridge Lane now called Grattan Road. Then he opened a school in a room above a shop in Westgate, run by John Akam & Sons.

A short while later the famous jewellers and goldsmiths Messrs. Fattorini & Sons offered the use of a large room above their premises in Cheapside, (where the Midland Hotel now stands) which Father Lynch was more than happy to accept. The school remained there until the school premises in Paradise Street became available and Saint Michael's school commenced operating. It was in this room also that the early meetings of the Young Men's Society took place.

Although the opening of Saint Michael's School brought an end to the school in Silsbridge Lane, the one in White Abbey continued until the arrival of the nuns in the parish in 1859.



Father Thomas Lynch

On 21st January 1859, the parish was able to purchase buildings and land in Paradise Street to be used as a school for the children of the parish. This was achieved, because at the time the education authorities of the town granted subsidies towards the erection of new schools provided a specified amount was previously raised by private subscription. The new school buildings were called Saint Michael's. This was the same building that was used in later years as Saint Michael's Chapel, where a children's Mass was celebrated at 9.30am each Sunday morning.

Father Lynch expended such a tremendous amount of time and energy on the

establishment of the first schools in the parish, together with the collection and administration of the funds, and the work involved in the acquisition of the site for Saint Michael's school that it is not surprising it should begin to take its toll on his health. This formerly jovial and happy hard-working priest began to lose the energy and strength that had helped him minister to Saint Patrick's for almost four years. So it was that in 1859 he resigned his charge and retired to his native Kells, where he died eight years later on 2nd January 1868.

Canon John Earnshaw, the Parish Priest at that time of the Golden Jubilee in 1903 said that Father Lynch would be remembered for laying the foundations of Catholic education in the parish, which almost fifty years later had achieved such a high degree of excellence.

Father Lynch was remembered long after he left the parish such was the esteem in which he was held, and shortly after his death a meeting of the congregation decided that his ministry and life should by commemorated.

They agreed that a collection be held to purchase stained-glass for the window above the high alter. The Parish Priest, Cannon Scruton prepared a design, and the stained glass was manufactured by the firm of Messrs. Hardman and Powell. Eighteen months later in 1871, the window was installed in the church: a demonstration of respect and affection of the people of the parish for a priest who had left the parish thirteen years previously

One can but wonder how many visitors to the church of this day and age look at the East window above the high alter, and realise that it was put there at great expense by a poor but grateful congregation, in commemoration of Father Thomas Lynch, Saint Patrick's first Parish Priest.

The nuns who came to teach at Saint Patrick's schools were not new to Bradford. Canon Thomas Harrison had brought the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Paul to Saint Mary's several years before they took up their position as teachers in the Parish, and they were well known in the area for their visits to the poor and sick.

The nuns began a Day School for girls and infants on Monday, 12th September 1859 and a Night School soon followed.

There was a Convent or private school (the forerunner of Saint Joseph's College) already in existence, and this was held at Eldon House. The school for boys in the room above Fatorinis in Cheapside was removed to Saint Michael's schoolrooms in Paradise Street on 14th August 1859.

At this time in Cropper Lane (now Rebbecca Street) the first Protestant 'Ragged School' in Bradford was doing well, having been established in March 1854. Over the years several priests of St. Patrick's threatened to withdraw the Sacraments of the Church from Catholic parents who sent their children to the 'Ragged School'. Cannon Earnshaw said

that the parents were being enticed by 'loaves and fishes'. It seems that the "Ragged School" offered inducements in the way of food and clothes for children to attend.

There was still a large percentage of people of the parish who did not speak or understand the English language. Over the years many priests ministered to the Gaelic speakers, and in 1860, we hear that Father Kelly, a Gaelic speaker, travelled regularly from Keighley to hear the confessions of those who could speak only Gaelic. The other Services presented little or no problem because they were at this time conducted in Latin, and strange as it may appear in this modern age even the uneducated parishioners found no difficulty in understanding the Services.

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Paul, although they had been working in the parish for some time, took up official residence on 9th September 1859. At first they were accommodated at a house in Drewton Street, later moving to a house at 7, Sedgefield Terrace, which was to be used in later years by the Guild of St. Agnes.

The Presbytery adjoining the church was built in 1867 and came into use almost immediately. Thirty-six years later, the Parish Priest Cannon Earnshaw complained about the lack of space and that there was no reception room: the dining room or the kitchen had to be used to receive visitors. The lack of space was rectified to some extent many years later when Canon Coughlan was Parish Priest. In the early 1970's he arranged for the alterations to the church to conform to the new regulations issued following the Vatican Council, 1963, and he extended the presbytery at the same time.

In 1869, the then Parish Priest Canon Scruton, introduced "mixed schools" to the parish. From then on both boys and girls were taught by the nuns in mixed classes at Saint Michael's School. This remained the system until the opening of the Canon Scruton Memorial Schools in Paradise Street and Sedgefield Terrace.

The year 1870 saw the introduction of the Education Act of Parliament known at the time as Mr. Forster's Act. This established school boards, which provided school accommodation at public expense. They would also have the right to restrict any grant maintained schools as was thought necessary and building grants for Voluntary Schools were abolished. Forster was William Edward Forster, the Bradford mill owner, Liberal reformer and Minister for Education who secured the passing of the Act in Partliament.

The idea behind Forster's Act was reasonable and humane, but it would deprive Catholics of a Catholic education for their children. In many cases parents would have no alternative but to allow their children to attend these Board Schools. A collection was therefore commenced throughout the entire country and over £300,000 was collected: a very large sum at that time. Young and old made donations; from people who could ill afford it, to the gentry and Catholic nobility, and other people in high places.

The result was that old school buildings were renovated and new ones built; teacher training was improved and the Government Inspectors were sufficiently satisfied that not one Catholic school was required to close: a demonstration of the importance with which this issue was regarded by the Catholics of the period.

Saint Patrick's new schools superseded Saint Michael's and were opened in January 1872. They were situated in Paradise Street. There is no mention in the records of any special ceremonies save for the announcement that schooling would commence a short while later on 21 April. Father Scruton blessed the school buildings on 15th April of that year in what was an exceptionally quiet ceremony. There is no public record of a collection being organised, laying of a foundation stone or any other public event. It would appear that even people living nearby did not realise that the schools were being built. Canon Earnshaw, writing in 1903 comments on the lack of public ceremony. Why were the school buildings erected in such secrecy? Was it to avoid any unpleasantness with the "Ragged School" or was there some other unknown reason?

After the death of another great and respected Parish Priest- Canon William Benedict Scruton in 1887, the people of the parish decided to erect a memorial in the church and another over his grave in Leeds Road Cemetery. In addition, it was proposed to build new schools to be known as the Cannon Scruton Memorial Schools. Within a year of the priest's death the first two memorials were erected and in place.

The foundation stone for the new Memorial Schools was laid four years later with such great pomp and ceremony that it demonstrates how attitudes had changed. Gone were the quiet self-effacing rituals of almost forty years previously: now the Catholics were prepared to let their presence be known. The opening ceremony of the schools began with a procession around the main streets of the parish, which was led by the Borough Brass Band. The thousands of parishioners who gathered outside the site of the schools were afterwards addressed by Arthur O'Connor MP and the Bishop the Right Reverend Monsignor Motler, V.G. who also performed the ceremony.

The Schools opened 21st April 1893. The Mayor of Bradford, His Majesty's Inspector of Schools and many other distinguished guests were present. The Girls' School was situated in Paradise Street, and the Boys' School just below the church in Sedgefield Terrace. Above the entrance to the school in Paradise Street was placed a large stone inscription, "Canon Scruton Memorial Schools."

Cardinal Logue of Armagh consecrated the church on 11th July 1903, and on 13 July 1903, the parishioners celebrated its Golden Jubilee. Cardinal Logue held the title Primate Of All Ireland, and as Bishop of Armagh was a direct spirtitual descendant of Saint Patrick who established the See of Armagh. The Parish Priest at this time was Reverend Cannon John Earnshaw who wrote and published a book of reminiscences of the first fifty years of Saint Patrick' Church.

At 3.30am on Thursday, 17th November 1966, seventy-five years after the foundation stone had been laid, a fire broke out in the Canon Scruton Memorial Schools in Paradise Street. It ravaged the entire buildings, destroying not only the school premises, but also the Young Men's Society Room, the Boys' Club and Saint Michael's Chapel.

The conflagration was of such ferocity that notwithstanding the attendance of seventy-five fire crew and their appliances, not a fragment of the building was left untouched. The burnt-out shell, which remained after the fire, was eventually demolished, and in place of the school buildings there now stands the new premises occupied by the Central Branch of the Irish Democratic League Club.

Saint Patrick's school was transferred to an empty school building in Usher Street as a temporary measure.

It is probably fitting that the Irish Democratic League Club should stand on the ground formerly occupied by the Canon Scruton Memorial Schools, because the club was founded by members of Saint Patrick's Parish in the 1880's. The Irish people of the time needed a place where they could congregate socially to share their culture and music. They were not always welcome in other clubs or public houses and were often treated with suspicion or contempt. Land League Clubs were set up all around Britain at this time and it is not known if the St. Patrick's I.D.L Club was formed with the political objectives of its parent body. It has to be said that it is highly unlikely that the club had any connection with the Mayo Land League. Common legend has it that it was, as it is now nothing more than a social club used mainly for the benefit of the parishioners of Saint Patrick's.

It began its life as The Irish Land League Club in a terraced house in nearby Wigan Street. Two other Land League clubs were later founded in other parishes in the City - The John Dillon Club in Little Horton Lane and the Michael Davitt Club in Leeds Road.

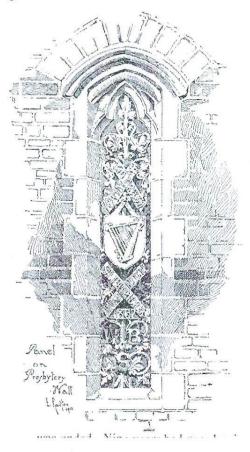
The Land League proper was founded in County Mayo in 1879 by Michael Davitt to fight against unfair eviction from the land by absentee English landlords who employed land agents like the notorious Captain Boycott to enforce their will. Davitt was the son of an evicted farmer in Co. Mayo. In previous years the land had been taken over by the Crown and given to honoured men for services to King and Country. These then rented the land to local tenant farmers, often at high rents. When the harvest was bad and the tenants could not pay their rent for that year, they were forcibly evicted by the land agents, such as Boycott. The farms were then rented out to other tenants. Sometimes the farm houses were set on fire or seriously damaged to prevent their reoccupation by the evicted tenant.

John Dillon, a Dublin man, was an MP, and a member of the Home Rule Parliamentary Party, which was lead by Charles Stewart Parnell. Its objective was to obtain Home Rule for Ireland by peaceful Parliamentary means. Davitt invited Parnell to lead the Land League and the two organisations became inextricably linked.

The Land League's objectives were - Fair rents, Fixity of tenure and Free sale of the right of occupancy: known at the time at the time as the three "F's".

The land agent for the estates in Co. Mayo owned by the 3rd. Earl of Erne was Captain Boycott. He was totally opposed to the requests of the Land League for reasonable reform and the locals refused to work for him. The local stores refused to serve him, he could not get his shoes repaired, his horses shod nor his crops harvested. He was completely isolated by all the local people who were following the instructions of Davitt, Parnell and Dillon. His name has now entered the English language as the eponym for the verb - "to boycott".

World War 1, from 1914 to 1918, saw thousands of men from Bradford volunteering for service with armed forces. The young men of Saint Patrick's also volunteered in their thousands and many did not return. They were remembered afterwards in a series of Requiem Masses celebrated in the church. A collection was taken up in the parish and a war memorial citing the names of the men of the parish who were killed in action was erected outside the church in Sedgefield Terrace. It can still be seen there beneath a panel high up on the presbytery wall, put there in 1867 when the presbytery was built, which reads in Gaelic "Erin Go Bragh".



Inscription above the harp: 'Erin go Bragh," "Ireland for ever."

The first bell obtained by the parish was erected in the belfry in 1866, and it remains there to this day. A chime of four bells was presented to the church by a parishioner on its Golden Jubilee in 1903. Over the years these bells have rung out announcing the services and at Angelus time. Even after most of the parishioners had moved from the area and the houses in the nearby streets had been cleared, the bell could still be heard at noon every day. It was rung by the headmistress of the infant's school, Sister Philomena, in the time honoured tradition to announce the Angelus to the few parishioners still within earshot of its melodious tones. Sister Philomena was moved by her Order to Birmingham in 1976 and the bells have remained silent since then. She died there on Sunday 29th September 2002.

In 1968 the newly built Saint Patrick's school premises in Wood Street were opened, and the children returned. Over the next twenty-one years the number of Moslem pupils in the school began to increase as the number of Christian pupils decreased. Of these Christian pupils, only a very small minority were Catholic. The entire Catholic ethos of the school had changed. Now the Christian pupils were separated from the rest of the school during Moslem services when the reverse had been the case when Moslem children were first admitted to the school. The parish continued to pay towards its support until 1989, when only about twenty of its pupils were Christian, of whom five were Catholic. The Church, therefore, relinquished its control of the school, and it was taken over by the Local



Saint Patrick

Education Authority, which duly renamed it Springwood First School. After 134 years Saint Patrick's Schools were no more.

The bells are silent now. The chime of four bells presented in 1903 has oxidised into one solid iron block. The school has gone and most of the people who were its parishioners have moved away to other areas. The streets around the church, which once thronged with people who lived in the little back-to-back and terraced houses are deserted, save for the workers who use the vacant land for parking their vehicles during the day. However, the church still commands a good attendance from many of its former parishioners who now live outside the area, and the weekly collection reflects their regard for Saint Patrick's and their heritage.

The present Parish Priest, Reverend Jeremiah Murphy took charge of the parish in 1985. He is ably assisted by Sister Veronica of The Cross and Passion Order and the many people of the parish who help with its day to day running.

Saint Patrick's Church is still in good hands after 150 years as it looks forward to whatever the future may hold.

